

Flooding



Homewood, September 16, 2004 (courtesy of Jefferson County EMA)



Homewood, September 16, 2004 (courtesy of Jefferson County EMA)



Tennessee River in Lacey's Spring
(photo courtesy of Patrick Gatlin, NWS)

Flash Flood

Flash flooding can occur almost anywhere at any time in Alabama. It can occur within a few minutes or hours of excessive rainfall, or from a dam or levee failure. Flash floods can destroy buildings and bridges, tear out trees, roll boulders, and scour out new channels. Rapidly rising water can reach heights of 30 feet or more! Furthermore, flash flood-producing rains can also trigger catastrophic mudslides. You may not always have a warning of these sudden and deadly floods.

Urban/Area Flood

Flooding can be magnified in urban areas. As land is converted from fields and woodlands to roads and parking lots, it loses its ability to absorb rainfall. Urbanization increases runoff two to six times over what would occur on natural terrain. During periods of urban flooding, streets can become swift-moving rivers, while basements can become death traps as they fill with water.

River Flood

Flooding along rivers is a natural and inevitable part of life. Some floods occur seasonally when winter or spring rains fill river basins with too much water too quickly. Others can occur from slow moving low pressure systems. Torrential rains from decaying hurricanes or tropical systems can also produce major or record river flooding.